



RACING AND WAGERING WESTERN AUSTRALIA

Important Greyhound Industry notice - Infectious Respiratory Disease occurrence

Greyhound Trainers, Owners and Veterinarians are advised that a recent occurrence of an acute severe respiratory disease syndrome, at a Greyhound kennel facility within Perth, has resulted in the deaths of two 12 month old greyhounds from Canine Haemorrhagic Pneumonia (CHP). Post-mortem examination subsequently identified *Streptococcus equi* subsp. *zooepidemicus* (*S. zooepidemicus*) as the causative agent. Other Greyhounds in the kennel were also affected but have since recovered. *S. zooepidemicus* is considered a highly contagious pathogen in dogs that has been linked to outbreaks of Canine Haemorrhagic Pneumonia (CHP), both in the eastern states of Australia and overseas.

Greyhound industry personnel are advised to closely monitor their Greyhounds for signs of respiratory disease that may include coughing, fever, muco-purulent nasal discharge, general malaise, loss of appetite, blood from nose or mouth, difficulty breathing, collapse or sudden death. Your veterinarian should be contacted immediately if you notice any of these signs or have any concerns with the wellbeing of your Greyhounds. Your veterinarian will advise you on the best treatment for the type of disease involved and this may include early intervention with antibiotics. In-contact dogs showing milder clinical signs can be treated as well, although not necessarily as intensively as acute cases.

Early signs of *S. zooepidemicus* infection may mimic the clinical signs of common "kennel cough", but the disease may progress into the more severe condition Canine Haemorrhagic Pneumonia (CHP) which can result in death of the animal.

S. zooepidemicus is highly contagious and considered a zoonotic disease in that it can also pose a health risk for humans. Human infections with *S. zooepidemicus* are rare and sporadic; however, infections have been associated with sore throats, pneumonia, meningitis and kidney disease. There has been only one proven case of transmission from an infected dog to a human. The initial clinical signs of infection in humans are vague, and include fever, malaise and nausea. Any person that has been in contact with dogs showing signs of respiratory disease, and feels unwell themselves, should contact their doctor or hospital for advice. As this pathogen is known to cross between species it is advisable that any persons showing signs of respiratory disease (e.g. "Strep throat") should also avoid close contact with Greyhounds whilst they are unwell.

Trainers, Owners and Veterinarians should note that any suspected or confirmed cases of infections with *S. zooepidemicus*, or Canine Haemorrhagic Pneumonia (CHP), should be immediately reported to the RWAA Chief Steward Greyhounds as is required under the Rules of Racing. On suspicion of this disease trainers should immediately instigate bio-security procedures including isolation of affected Greyhounds, disinfection of kennels with bleach or Pine disinfectant and stop all movement of Greyhounds on or off the property until the situation can be further assessed.

Any Greyhound suffering from signs of contagious respiratory disease should not be brought to any race meeting, trial or race track to exercise. If the On Track Veterinary Surgeon suspects that any greyhound may be suffering from contagious respiratory disease, the Greyhound will be removed from the kennels without delay, and sent home.

For any further information contact RWAA Veterinarian Dr. Judith Medd on 9277 0759.

24th May 2011